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FREEDOM

A PLAY BY
ALICE GROFF



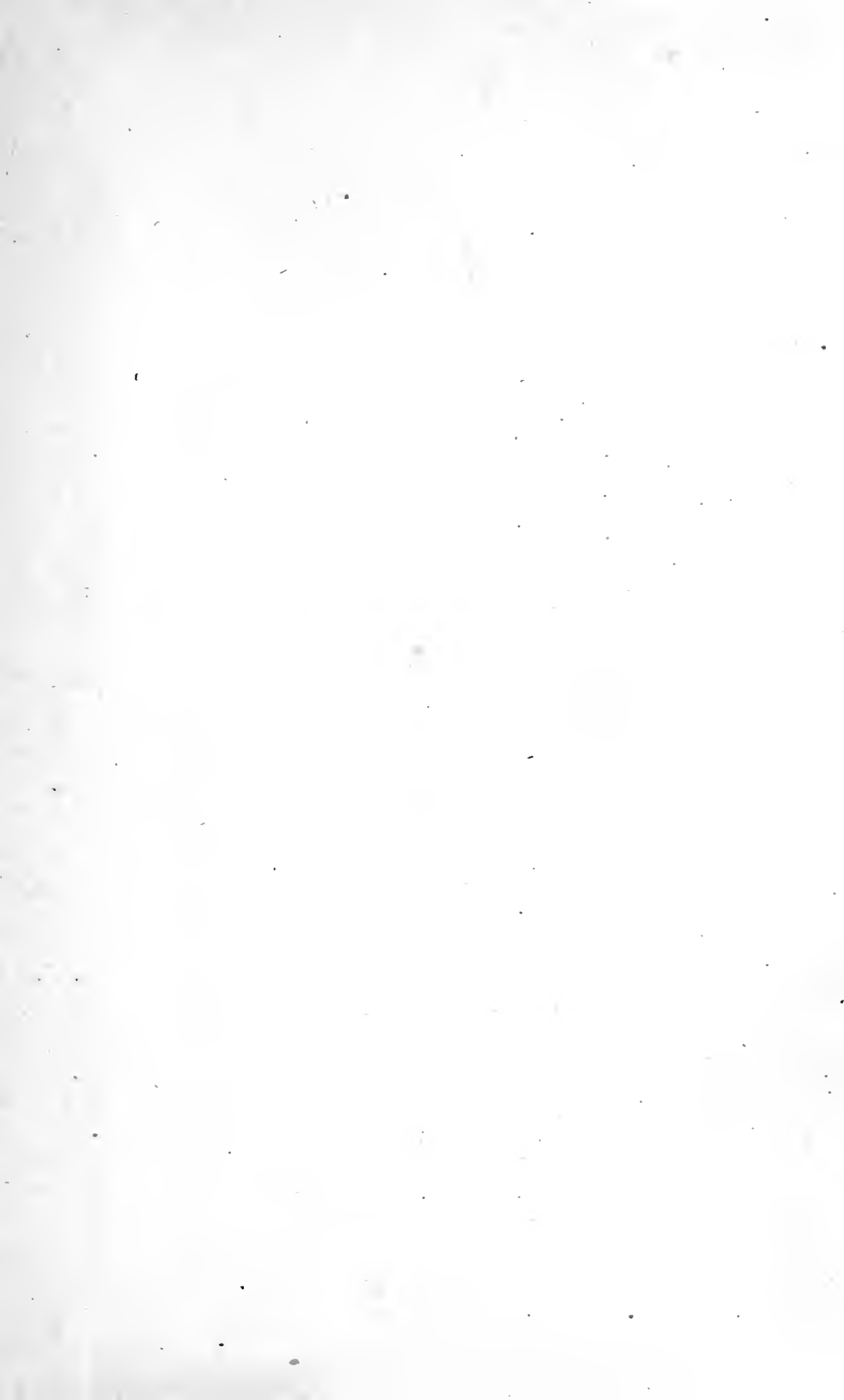


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FREEDOM

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

BY

Alice Groff



Boston: Richard G. Badger

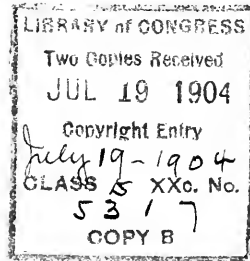
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CHARACTERS

MARGARET LATHROP—Teacher of vocal music.

ROSE DELACOUR—Painter.

MAX HELDEN—Socialistic agitator.

ANGUS M'KENZIE—Scientific Specialist in Sociology.

SUSAN—Maid servant to Margaret.

Action takes place in house of Margaret Lathrop and her brother, in one of our large Eastern cities.



ACT ONE—CRANKS

SCENE — *Spacious, well-proportioned, well-lighted room, artistically but not expensively furnished. Color-scheme, fawn, shading upward into olive-green, downward into olive brown. Large bay window in centre, filled with growing plants. Brick fire-place across corner at one end, surmounted by wooden shelves, containing books, a striking clock, and a few curios, making effective touches of color. Set of hanging shelves at opposite corner of room holding jars and pots of foreign ware in bright hues. Fine photographs in frames upon the walls, with a bit done in oil here and there, and interspersed with interesting pieces of bas-relief in plaster. Grand piano, with well-filled music shelves near. Floor stained and bare except for two oriental rugs of good size in dull colors. A large, luxurious-looking divan right front furnished in Turkish fashion with innumerable richly colored cushions. Comfortable chairs here and there fashioned after the new art—the wood stained in dull green or brown, with separate upholstery in leather to match in color. Windows with leaded panes above, dark-cream Madras sash-curtains below and severely draped on sides with straight folds of oriental stuff in dull colors, falling to the floor. Medium-sized plaster cast of "Victory of Samothrace" on*

piano, a cast of the "Winged Mercury" surmounting music-shelves. A daintily appointed open writing desk in dull-green wood standing out somewhat on floor to left front. A door at either end of room, one leading to staircase, another to adjoining chamber.

(Curtain rises revealing Margaret Lathrop seated in chair in front of desk. The unique fashion of her gown and its fitness to herself betrays artistic taste and originality. Her right hand resting on desk holds an open letter. Her expression shows her lost in pleasing thought. It is evening. There is a rap at the door.)

MARGARET (*without turning, and placing letter deep in a certain pigeon-hole of desk*)—Come!

SUSAN (*opening door*)—A gentleman to see you, miss—Mr. McKenzie.

MARGARET—Show him up, Susan.

(Angus McKenzie enters—tall, slender, studentish-air, quietly dressed. As he faces Margaret, they both laugh their pleasure at the sight of each other. Angus comes forward and takes both of Margaret's hands.)

ANGUS—How good it is to see you again! Five years! and you look as if it were yesterday! The Queen of Sheba still—only more so! Do you remember how we used to call you the Queen of Sheba?

MARGARET—Oh yes! Your tribute to my gowns, which I always designed myself, as I still do.

ANGUS—Our tribute to the way you wore those gowns (*admiringly*), carried them off, as it were. What a charming studio! You prosper in your profession—your *art*, I should say, I suppose.

MARGARET—Yes, modestly. I happen to be the fad here as to vocal training. Foreign prestige you know (*smiling*).

ANGUS—True merit, I am prepared to swear. There was never a more conscientious worker than you were when we were in Paris, together.

MARGARET—And how you worked, too! And you return to your native land at last—

ANGUS—Poorer than a church mouse, as I have always been! (*With a quiet little characteristic shrug.*)

MARGARET—But your book?

ANGUS—Scarcely more than a statistical record of investigations, and not well received at that.

MARGARET—Oh you disparage yourself—as you always used to do—out of a morbid modesty.

ANGUS—No! Scientific works have but a limited public at best, and mine is simply the detail of the research of a specialist—tedious and with infinitesimally small results.

MARGARET—But it has attracted favorable com-

ment enough to make me proud of you.

ANGUS—Yet it brings me in such a pittance that you would smile at the thought of my gaining a livelihood by such work.

MARGARET—But you have been called to the assistant professorship of Sociology in our university!

ANGUS—Yes! And I have prostituted my character in accepting.

MARGARET—Prostituted your character?

ANGUS—You know how I loathe universities and colleges—the whole system of modern education. You know something of my ideals for the social order in this regard.

MARGARET—Then you have not changed from the radical ideas of those Paris days?

ANGUS—You naturally concluded that I had because of my acceptance of this position?

MARGARET—Of course.

ANGUS—No! No! Rather have those ideals deepened and intensified. But have you changed? You seemed to share those ideas then—in part at least.

MARGARET—No! I have not changed. My ideas, like yours, have only deepened and intensified. But you remember that though we were in sympathy, upon broad general principles, we differed somewhat as to details and as to appli-

cations of principles?

ANGUS—Yes, I remember. But I never could quite get you down to details as to applications of principles. You are a woman, you know—you belong to the generalizing sex. But you formulated, if I recollect rightly, a great ultimate ideal for the social order, that I was in sympathy with on broad lines, but that was too vague for me to get a working hold upon. Do you still hold it? Formulate it for me again! (*Gazing admiringly at Margaret.*)

MARGARET (*smiling*)—Indeed I do still hold it. (*As if reciting.*) I believe that the whole social question would be solved if everybody lived to make this world as healthful, as beautiful, as inspiring a place as possible for women to bring well-born children into. (*Finishing with a very serious and earnest expression.*)

ANGUS (*laughing*)—Yes, that was it, and it sounds axiomatic so to speak. Do you know I find myself more in sympathy with it than ever?

MARGARET (*with fervor*)—Oh how happy it makes me, to hear you say that!

ANGUS—Well you see I have the stock-breeder's passion with regard to the human race. All my enthusiasm of life is in the direction of discovering methods to make the finest possible creatures out of human beings. But, how to be-

gin—that's the question?

MARGARET—Oh, the discussions we used to have—you and I and Rose Delacour and Max Helden—upon this point! Do you remember Rose and Max?

ANGUS—I do indeed! Though I have never heard from them since.

MARGARET—They will be here tonight. I thought it would be interesting to initiate a renewal of our old gatherings.

ANGUS (*controlling expression of disappointment*)—Yes! Do you see much of them?

MARGARET—Rose I have seen a great deal of in the five years that have passed.

ANGUS—And Max?

MARGARET—Max has been here only at rare intervals. He travels about lecturing on socialism—haranguing the working people, on street-corners, living like a tramp most of the time that he may identify himself with the poor and oppressed of the earth.

ANGUS—And how does he get his livelihood?

MARGARET—Oh, he has a little patrimony—five hundred a year I believe!

ANGUS—Five hundred a year? That is two hundred more—than—! Has Miss Delacour made the success of painting that you have of music?

MARGARET—I am afraid not—poor dear little Rose! She is what the world calls a bad manager. She is possessed of a morbidly injudicious generosity, that is always getting her into debt.

ANGUS—Her energies are rather spasmodic, too, I fancy.

MARGARET—Perhaps so! She does a very good piece of work now and then, however, that attracts an appreciative purchaser, but she has had a struggling time on the whole to keep herself and her mother, who died a year ago.

ANGUS—I shall be glad to see her and Helden again. Are they still as rabid as ever against marriage?

MARGARET (*laughing*)—More so if possible! You remember they thought that the only way to begin to work out my ideal for the social order was to abolish marriage.

ANGUS—Oh, yes! I remember.

MARGARET—They felt that this was the greatest obstacle to women's being able to bring well-born children into the world.

ANGUS—And you—did you agree with them—I cannot quite remember?

MARGARET—No-o! Not—exactly. I felt that marriage as an institution *is* one of the greatest obstacles in the way of this ideal, but I did not—I do not believe in trying to abolish it—yet!—I

believed—I still believe—in—in—reforming it—from within.

ANGUS (*earnestly*)—In reforming it from within? How? (*A rap.*) Susan (*opens door and announces*)—Miss Delacour and Mr. Helden.

(*Rose and Max enter. Rose dark, petite, countenance denoting emotional temperament, dressed dowdily but somewhat showily. Max, large, blond, handsome, self-important in a rough cloth suit and negligee shirt.*)

MARGARET (*moving forward and shaking hands with Rose and Max*)—Do you remember Mr. McKenzie?

ROSE—Oh. yes! (*To McKenzie*)—Margaret told us that we were to have this pleasure. It is a great pleasure to see you again, looking just the same.

ANGUS—You are very kind. The pleasure is mutual. Seeing you brings back the old Paris days.

MAX (*to McKenzie*)—Well, sociologist! What have you been doing for socialism?

ANGUS—As rabid as ever, I see! Well, I've not been doing much for socialism—but something I hope for social advancement.

MAX—For social advancement, heh?

ANGUS—Yes. Something that the social order will profit by (*with a smile and a gentle shrug*)—

a thousand years from now, perhaps.

MAX—A thousand years from now! And meanwhile what a hell the social order is, for everybody but the pampered few!

MARGARET—There's Max for you! The social order is a hell—always a hell! Now, Max, own up; isn't there a little drop of heaven in it occasionally?

MAX (*gloomily*)—For such as you perhaps—who are a success in it—by pandering to convention.

ANGUS—Pandering to convention? What do you mean?

MAX (*not heeding Angus*)—You—who never trouble yourself about how the underhalf lives.

ROSE—Oh, Max! that isn't fair. Margaret lives a very earnest working life, as you know, and she began when she was only fifteen years old to make her own way in the world, and—

MARGARET—There! there! Rose dear—

ROSE (*insistently*)—And she has been husband to her mother, and father to her younger sisters and brothers until they could take care of themselves, and she helps poor young women by teaching them for nothing,—

MARGARET—Rose, dear! There is no need to defend me thus, besides Max doesn't quite mean what he says. (*To Max.*) I should like you to

understand though, Max, that I consider my work in the world quite as definitely for the good of the social order as yours is. Of course you don't see it that way, but that is because you are a bigot.

MAX—A bigot?

MARGARET—Yes, the worst sort of bigot. The bigot of liberalism, so called!

MAX—How can I enjoy this world when I see so many of my fellow beings tyrannized over, trampled upon, robbed of their rights by the rich and powerful?

MARGARET (*smiling*)—Do you count me among the tyrannizing rich and powerful?

MAX—How can I help but disapprove of those who give any countenance to luxury, to fine clothes, to the æsthetics of life, while their fellow-beings shiver and starve?

ROSE (*excitedly*)—Yes! It is terrible to think of! Max has convinced me that I have no right to go on painting pictures for the rich to enjoy.

MARGARET—Why, Rose! Rose!

ROSE—That I should throw up this vain and useless life and try to *serve* my fellow men.

ANGUS—And add one more to the shivering and starving horde by leaving the ranks of the economic workers.

ROSE—Oh, no! Not that! I must work—but

I shall go far, far away from here. I shall find something to do that will make me feel myself more one with the poor and oppressed of the earth—some humble occupation.

MARGARET—But my dear Rose, what humble occupation are you fitted for?

ROSE—I can *become* fitted—

MARGARET—Why, Rose dear, you have spent the best years of your life in culture for that for which you have the most definite native talent, and now you propose to go into some humbler occupation for which you are unsuited by both nature and training.

MAX—Training! Culture! These words set me on fire! What opportunity for culture and training do the workers of the earth—the producers—have? Those who are robbed to give to the cultured and trained their idle and luxurious existence?

ANGUS—Come! Come! Fire-eater! Be a little more reasonable! The producers, as you call them, are not the only workers of the earth.

MAX—Show me the others!

ANGUS—Are not those who labor with their minds to find means of advancement and elevation for the social order, workers as well? Do not such workers need culture and training for their work?

ROSE (*nervously*)—Yes, but Max and I think that if everybody worked at some simple manual labor, the social question would be solved, and there would be no need to labor with the mind to find schemes for benefiting society.

ANGUS—Ah!

ROSE (*more earnestly*)—Oh, yes, and he thinks that the more intellectual we become the worse the social order grows. He would do away with books and study; he would have us all learn from nature and life, and read only the record of the facts of life from day to day.

MAX—You report me well, my dear Rose! But surely you will endorse this last, Margaret! I remember your saying long ago that books were a dead issue or something of that sort, and I really began to think that you were becoming a little bit advanced.

MARGARET—How condescending you are, Max! I meant books as mere literature. I think that literature as such *is* a dead issue. I think that the time will come when Milton and Shakspeare will be shelved; when the æsthetics of expression in writing shall be universal; when poetry shall be the language of the daily newspaper.

MAX—Hear! Hear!

ANGUS—Yes, and this is the quarrel that I

have with universities and all educational institutions of the day. They hinder this sort of evolution as to writing, as to all true knowledge of life.

MAX—And not only do educational institutions hinder the advancement of the social order, but all other institutions that are based upon tradition, and none with such absolutely deadening effect as the institution of marriage.

ANGUS—At it still, Max! Well, I grant you that the institution of marriage deserves to have a great many crimes laid at its door.

MAX—I am glad to hear you acknowledge as much.

ANGUS—But where you and I differ, my dear Helden, is that you would abolish—wipe out—all these institutions at one fell swoop, while I would reform them from within, as Margaret would say.

MAX—In a word, you are the coward of convention!

ANGUS (*with dignity*)—In a word, I am evolutionary, while you are revolutionary!

MARGARET—Yes, this is the rock on which Max and I split. Of course marriage makes bond slaves of men and women in many cases. I should be glad to see it die, as an institution.

MAX—And what do you do to help it die?

MARGARET—Wait, Max, till you hear me out. I should not wish to see it die until some better institution develops to take its place. I am as Angus says—evolutionary and not revolutionary.

MAX—How would the great crisal strides of development ever have been made if everybody had waited for evolution to bring them about.

ANGUS—Evolution brought about all the crisal strides in development before you rabid revolutionists appeared upon the scene, and I believe that it will continue to do so even now that you are here.

MAX—You are facetious!

ANGUS—In a word, my dear fellow, the social order is an organism that will develop of the inward urgency of its own life, as all organisms do, and the noisy sputtering of one little cell is not going to work miracles of growth in a night.

MAX—It is the individual cell that is the pioneer,—

ANGUS—It is the unanimity of many, many cells, my dear Helden, working faithfully and patiently together toward a great social ideal that is the only guarantee of true social growth, of true social advancement.

MAX—And what would you consider a great social ideal, if I may ask?

ANGUS—Margaret expressed *one*, just before you came in—a rather comprehensive ideal—the making of this world the most healthful—comfortable. (*Looking inquiringly and mischievously at Margaret.*)

MARGARET—Beautiful and inspiring place—

ANGUS—Beautiful and inspiring place, possible, for woman to bring well-born children into.

MAX (*looking curiously and rather contemptuously at McKenzie*)—H'm!

ANGUS—Isn't that plastic enough to cover pretty nearly everything?

MAX (*pompously*)—The greatest ideal that the social order can entertain is that of individual freedom. And how can human beings born in the slavery of marriage have any conception of freedom?

MARGARET—You were born in the slavery of marriage; how did you get your conception of freedom?

ANGUS—An ideal of freedom for the individual, that is to be realized only at the expense of the best good of the whole social body—or at least of the greatest number—is not a great social ideal.

ROSE—But who is to decide what is the best good of the social body, or of the greatest number?

ANGUS—Only evolution can decide.

MAX—But how? What do you mean?

ANGUS—That which the social body assimilates in time—makes a part of itself, so to speak—*must* be for the best good of the social order.

MAX—Well, isn't revolution a part of such evolution?

ANGUS—Yes. The revolution that is the universalizing of individual revolutionary ideas.

MAX—Ah!

ANGUS (*patronizingly*)—But all individual revolutionary ideas are not destined to become socially universalized, and you revolutionary cells should remember this when you burn for individual freedom.

MAX (*fiercely to Margaret*)—And you! Would you marry after the conventional fashion?

MARGARET—What do you mean by the conventional fashion?

MAX (*looking furtively at Angus*)—Oh you know well enough that I do not mean with priest and book! I know that you are evolved beyond that, but would you give any man marital rights with regard to you?

MARGARET (*slowly and quietly*)—No! I would give no man marital rights with regard to me.

MAX—There speaks the woman I have thought

you to be!

MARGARET—Wait Max! I would allow no man to support me. You see, I must always support myself.

MAX—Splendid!

ROSE—Yes, you would not let him support you, any more than you would support him.

MARGARET—No, Rose, dear!

ROSE (*very intensely and in a low voice*)—Then you would live with the man you loved without legal sanction?

MAX (*satirically*)—Oh, no! The man she loved would have to come and live with her, and bring plenty of legal sanction along.

MARGARET (*ignoring Max*)—No, Rose, dear! Do you not see that if I lived openly with any man in the marriage relation without legal sanction I should be unable to support myself? I should be obliged to give up my beautiful work in life. I should entirely lose my economic independence.

ROSE—Why? How? Margaret.

MARGARET—I should be boycotted by society—nobody would send me her daughter for lessons.

ROSE (*more intensely and almost in a whisper*)—Then you would do it secretly?

MARGARET—Never! This would be to live a lie in the social order. I could never do that. I

might *tell* a lie under great pressure—a lie that would seem to me justifiable—but to *live* a lie, day in and day out, I should have to be a moral degenerate to keep that up.

ROSE—Then you would never marry, Margaret? Never have a child?

MARGARET—I would never marry if this involved my giving up my economic independence—my beautiful work—my already assumed responsibilities to others.

MAX (*with bitterness*)—Then you will live the abortive existence of a woman who refuses to obey the primal instincts of humanity, the procreative impulse?

MARGARET—If I must—yes! But (*smiling*) I still live in hopes of finding a man—

ANGUS—Who will—?

MARGARET (*with effort and in a low voice*)—Who will be just and generous and sweet souled enough to give me the social protection of a legal marriage without claiming any of the “rights” that such marriage would secure to him.

MAX—What! And you would give to him in return—

MARGARET (*lifting her head and speaking proudly*)—The same freedom that he would give to me—freedom of thought, freedom of heart, freedom of action.

MAX—Oh, no, you wouldn't. There is no woman alive capable of doing that when it comes to the pinch.

ROSE—How beautiful that would be, Margaret! But would you expect him to be faithful to you in love?

MARGARET—I would *expect* nothing. But it is an ideal of mine that he—that we—should be faithful in love, because we couldn't help it. (*Laughing softly.*)

MAX—Well, you'll never find your man. Such an existence would be hell to any present-day masculine.

ANGUS—And why, pray?

MAX—It would be hell to the man who believed in marriage and equally hell to the man who didn't. See!

MARGARET—It would not be hell to the man who feels as I do about marriage. In such a union only could a man and woman both realize—in one line of life at least—that individual freedom that you are always talking about.

MAX—Bah! And you would go through such a farce as that to set each other free, when you could be just as free without it?

MARGARET—No, Max! We could not *both* be free without. A woman can never be as free as a man in the present social order, but she

could have the greatest possible freedom in such a marriage as that—

ANGUS—And this is the way in which you would reform marriage from within?

MAX—Yes, reform marriage so as to free woman and enslave man.

MARGARET—In what way could such a marriage enslave a man?

MAX—How could a man be free if he were legally married? In the eyes of the law he would be a criminal if he were not faithful to his wife.

ANGUS—Is the average married man of today a slave as regards the law in that particular?

MAX—I leave you to answer that question to your own satisfaction. I must be going. (*To Margaret.*) Rose proposes to spend the night with you, I believe?

MARGARET—Yes. Good night, Max. Come again.

MAX—Thank you. (*To Rose.*) Ta ta, Rose. (*To McKensie.*) We must have another round at this. Good bye!

ANGUS—Hold on, Max. I'll join you. (*To Rose.*) Good evening, Miss Delacour; better change your mind about giving up painting. (*To Margaret at the door.*) When can I see you again?

MARGARET (*warmly and in a low voice*)—

Whenever you will. (*Returning toward Rose and seating herself in a large chair*). Now Rosey Posey, come sit on my knee and tell me all about this wild, wild thing that you are going to do.

ROSE—No! no! Margaret dear, not on your knee (*bringing a low cushioned stool*), but at your feet—so (*seating herself with face turned slightly away from Margaret, and with her arm resting on Margaret's lap.*)

MARGARET—Now are we quite comfortable?

ROSE—So cosey. (*Gazing out absent-mindedly.*)

MARGARET—Well, sweetheart!

ROSE—Oh, where shall I begin! You know, Margaret, dear, that Max and I love each other, and we are so happy—at least one of us is.

MARGARET—Yes, dear.

ROSE—And you know that this began long ago—in Paris—at least for one of us.

MARGARET (*very tenderly*)—Yes, dear Rose.

ROSE—And you know what a great, great soul Max is! How he believes in living for the whole social order, for the whole human family, instead of for one little family of his own.

MARGARET—I hadn't known quite all this until now, dear; but go on.

ROSE—Well, Max has shown me plainly what idle, selfish, cowardly things women are in the

social order.

MARGARET—Ah!

ROSE—He has made me see that they just hang upon men and hinder them in all that they would do in great ways.

MARGARET (*indignantly*)—How does Max—but go on, dear; pardon me.

ROSE—That it is wicked for a human being to want to bind another for life to any relation—that love of every kind should be free—that men are trying to bring about this kind of freedom as far as women will let them.

MARGARET—As far as women—oh!—but go on, dear—don't let me interrupt you.

ROSE—That woman should be unselfish enough to trample upon the restrictions of the social order as to herself, in this respect, should no longer desire marriage, should declare herself free to the whole world in these things.

MARGARET (*with agitation*)—And you! You agree with Max in all this?

ROSE—Of course, dear! How can I help but do so, when he makes it so plain?

MARGARET—What does he make so plain?

ROSE—That a man with cosmic emotions cannot limit his love to one woman—that woman should be large-minded, large-souled enough to throw off wishing to limit her love to one man.

MARGARET—Ah! I see!

ROSE—He says, "Think of a woman like Margaret"—meaning you, dear—"limiting her love to one man." He admires you extravagantly—he calls you "Margaret the Magnificent!" He has only one thing against you—that you surround yourself with comfort and beauty while others starve, that your life is not given to working for your fellow men.

MARGARET—What does Max do in the way of—but go on, Rose, dear—so you are going to give up your little home and the work that you love and—go where, dear—do what?

ROSE—I have succeeded in renting my pretty little home, all that dear mother had to leave me.

MARGARET—And this will keep you from want at least—until—

ROSE—Yes. And I am going to join the Morris Colony and do what my hands find to do, while—while—

MARGARET (*bending her face down to Rose with a startled look*)—While what, dear?

ROSE—While I am bringing a child into the world—Max's child and mine.

MARGARET (*greatly agitated but striving for calm*)—Does Max know? Is he going with you?

ROSE—Yes, Max knows. No, he is not going

with me.

MARGARET—He will join you later?

ROSE—No, Margaret dear. You do not understand. (*With gentle superiority.*) We do not believe in marriage—Max and I—not even in a monogamous relation. He leaves me—free—as I leave him—to—to—love any one else—in—in the same way.

MARGARET (*excitedly*)—And your child, Rose! Does Max mean to help you support it—bring it up? Have you thought of that?

ROSE—Yes, I have thought of that. Max said that the Morris Colony would provide for it and me, on socialistic principles, as soon as I was established there, and that if the worst came to the worst, he would help me—but he may have other children to help provide for, and so I am glad—glad—

MARGARET—Glad that you have your little home to fall back upon.

ROSE—Yes. Max wanted me to sell it and spend the money in publishing his writings on social freedom—

MARGARET—But you did not—

ROSE—I could not—it is secured to me and—my child.

MARGARET—That is well, dear! (*With difficulty restraining her tears.*) And when do you

think of starting for the Morris Colony?

ROSE—In a few days—all is ready.

MARGARET—Shall you go among perfect strangers?

ROSE—No, I shall go to the Carters at first. Mrs. Carter is an old schoolmate of mine; she and her husband joined the colony when it first started up.

MARGARET—Then there are married people in the colony?

ROSE—Oh, yes, dear. Did you think the whole colony thought as Max—and I do?

MARGARET—I had hoped so, but no matter. You are sure of a kind reception?

ROSE—Oh, yes, Margaret—as kind as you would give me. I could not say more, could I? (*Rising and facing Margaret with a loving smile.*)

MARGARET—Oh, Rose, dear, you break my heart! But what can I do? You will write me; you will let me know how you fare; you will let me help you in every way that I can?

ROSE—Yes, dear Margaret, I will let you help me if I have need. But I shall not write even to Max—except rarely—he does not think it wise—if I wish really to wean myself from old associations.

MARGARET (*rising and folding Rose in her*

arms)—You will need my help, dear! The social order is not yet developed to the point when a woman like you can walk alone.

CURTAIN

ACT TWO—THE NEW WOMAN

SCENE—*The same.*

(*Curtain rises on Margaret and Max. It is evening. The clock strikes seven. Max has just entered the room.*)

MAX—It is good of you to let me come so early. I am a crank, I know, but I will not turn night into day, as society does.

MARGARET (*graciously*)—It is the wiser way to live doubtless.

MAX (*complacently*)—Yes, I make it a rule to be in bed by ten o'clock, and even earlier if my work permits.

MARGARET—One deprives oneself of a great deal of pleasure, of course.

MAX—Yes! But pleasure is not what I live for.

MARGARET—What do you live for?

MAX—Can you know me and ask that? For freedom—freedom for myself and others.

MARGARET—Freedom from what?

MAX—From all the trammelings of convention—from the bondage of the law—from the tyranny of love—

MARGARET (*in mock pious tones*)—Good Lord, deliver us (*laughing*). You should write a new litany, Max. But do you really fancy that

any one can be free to that extent, even in the anarchial state which is *Krapotkin's* ideal?

MAX—Why not?

MARGARET—As individuals in the social organism, our freedom can be no greater than the greatest freedom to which the organism as a whole has attained.

MAX (*sneeringly*)—There speaks McKenzie.

MARGARET—Perhaps. Angus is one of my Gamaliels.

MAX (*drawing close to Margaret and gazing at her with glowing eyes*)—You are a slave, Margaret—

MARGARET—Perhaps. As all women are slaves. Somewhat greater slaves than you men are.

MAX—But you women need not be such slaves as you are. You worship idleness and luxury,—this is why you marry—this is why the hideous institution of marriage is perpetuated.

MARGARET (*with quiet sarcasm*)—What percentage of women marry in the hope or the prospect of securing idleness and luxury?

MAX—The average woman marries to be supported, doesn't she?

MARGARET (*thoughtfully*)—Women marry—for—for—many reasons.

MAX (*insistently*)—But chiefly—

MARGARET—Chiefly I think,—though they do

not realize it perhaps, for the protection that marriage gives them in the exercise of their maternal instincts,—from the brutalities with which the social order persecutes those who exercise these instincts without marriage.

MAX—But will this brutal persecution ever cease, while women are such cowards that they do not defy it?

MARGARET—How can they defy it?

MAX—By becoming economically independent and then refusing to marry.

MARGARET—How blind you are, Max, to a fact that you do not wish to see! Have I not shown you plainly that a woman must *lose* her economic independence the moment she so defies the social order.

MAX—Your sort of economic independence perhaps. There are other ways of earning a living—more arduous—less luxurious—that would not be likely to suffer from boycotting.

MARGARET—You know perfectly well, Max, that the scrub-woman who is not what is called the honest mother of her child suffers from such persecution—and what is more, the child suffers.

MAX—How are free children ever to be born of mothers who are not free?

MARGARET—The mothers must be set free by

the fathers. It is *men* who must set both mother and child free.

MAX—And how, if I might ask?

MARGARET—Men must marry the *women* they wish to make mothers and *then* set them free.

MAX—Marry them, and then set them free? What madness! It is marriage that enslaves both women and men.

MARGARET—It is the spirit in which men interpret marriage,—not the legal form, that makes them slaves.

MAX—What do you mean?

MARGARET—You say that you want to help women to be free,—as free at least as men are. Now the only way for you to begin to bring this about is to marry some woman whom you love,—who is in sympathy with your ideas,—and then say to her, “I have purchased you from the law, I now release you from any marital obligation to me. You are free—as I am free.”

MAX (*mockingly*)—“As I am free!”—I should be free indeed under any such arrangement as that!

MARGARET—You would be free as the woman would be. Would you wish to establish a different kind of freedom for men from that for women?

MAX—Ah, then, Margaret, you are not a

monogamist after all!

MARGARET—What do you mean?

MAX—You would wish to be free to love other men—even if you were married.

MARGARET—I would wish to be free from vows to *any* man. But you misinterpret me, Max. I believe in monogamy, but I believe in it for two—a woman and a man, not for a woman only.

MAX—And you would give yourself for life to *one man* in a strictly monogamous relation—such a woman as you are—many sided enough to be a compliment to a dozen men?

MARGARET—I would give myself to one man in marriage as long—as we loved each other.

MAX—And you could not love more than one man at a time—come now, Margaret! Such a woman as you are!

MARGARET—Of course I could love more than one man at a time, but for the exquisite and subtle intimacy of a marriage relation—what are you thinking of, Max?

MAX—This is where you women are not yet highly evolved. I can love a dozen women at once. I love all women—any woman. I love Rose, I love you (*passionately*) glorious Margaret! Think of the child that could be born of you and me—born in freedom.

MARGARET (*in fine scorn*)—Don't touch me,

Max! Do you fancy for one moment that I would bring a child into the world handicapped by illegal birth?

MAX (*in passionate admiration*)—How splendid you are, Margaret!

MARGARET (*ignoring Max*)—Exposing his innocent head to the brutal persecutions, the blighting ban of the social order!

MAX (*with fervor*)—He could not help but be proud of such a mother as you!

MARGARET (*still ignoring Max*)—No! I have wished all through my mature life to be a mother, but I would rather die than bring a child into the world, except in accordance with my highest ideal.

MAX (*as if under a spell of fascination*)—And what is this ideal?

MARGARET (*suddenly becoming calm and looking very seriously at Max*)—My child must have the reasonable prospect of physical and mental health, a high moral nature, and the best social environment that can be compassed.

MAX (*still gazing at Margaret as in fascination*)—And marriage would be necessary to this?

MARGARET—No man should ever be the father of my child until he had first set me free, in the only way in which a woman can be free—at present.

MAX (*breathlessly*)—Margaret, if I should set you free so?—

MARGARET—You could not, Max. Only that man who fully shares my ideal can set me free.

MAX (*released from the fascination*)—Such a man does not exist, he would be a—a—"beyond man."

MARGARET—"A beyond man!" I thank you for that word. I live in hopes of finding this beyond man.

MAX (*coldly*)—He does not belong to this stage of evolution.

MARGARET—Perhaps not, but as there is always in every stage of evolution an individual prototype of the coming more highly evolved species, I shall live in hopes of finding this prototype of "beyond man."

MAX—Then I must pass out of your life?

MARGARET—No, Max! You have never been in my life in the sense which you imply—you remain where you always were.

MAX (*preparing to leave, and with an unpleasant smile*)—You are kind! Good bye!

MARGARET—You will readily find consolation, my dear Max. Good bye.

(*Max goes out. Margaret returns to middle of room, and stands with bowed head and hands clasped before her. The clock strikes eight.*)

There is a rap.)

SUSAN (*opening door to staircase*)—Mr. McKenzie, Miss.

ANGUS (*entering*)—Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest! I met Helden on his way out. He calls early.

MARGARET—Yes; Max hates the social convention which involves late hours. He retires regularly at ten o'clock.

ANGUS—He looks as if he took that sort of indulgent care of himself.

MARGARET—I think perhaps we would all be healthier and happier if we lived so.

ANGUS—Not until society is so ordered that one can have day-time for his play as well as his work, can this be practicable for us all; and we should be a world of lunatics if he had *no* play time.

MARGARET (*admiringly*)—It is just like you, Angus, to look at it thus. You think for others just as for yourself. If all men were like you the social order would soon attain to my ideal.

ANGUS—Oh, Margaret, can you say this! Why, I am unable to formulate anything that unifies my own conflicting ideals, much less the conflicting ideals of a race.

MARGARET—Only the race as a whole can unify the conflicting ideals of a race. Must I

teach this back to you? But you ought to be able to unify your own.

ANGUS—Yes, but live them *out*, is what I mean.

MARGARET—You can try. Come tell me about these conflicting ideals of yours.

ANGUS (*looking eagerly at Margaret*)—One of my ideals is to be the husband of the woman I love, the father of her children, in a sweet home, where peace and beauty reign. Think of a poor devil like me—who has never had a home—having an ideal like that!

MARGARET—Well, and another, that you cannot reconcile with this.

ANGUS—Another is to give myself wholly up to this intellectual passion that dominates me—the passion for the study of the social organism and the best methods of its life and development.

MARGARET—And you cannot live for both of these?

ANGUS—Live for both of them? Why, I cannot live for one. Dare I marry and be the father of children without being able to provide for those children?

MARGARET—But you could—

ANGUS—Yes, I might be able to do this by not only stifling the other ideal, but by prostituting my faculties to a work that I loathe.

MARGARET—You mean university teaching?

ANGUS—Yes; the sort of teaching that one *must* do in universities today—teaching in which one must stifle one's convictions and pervert the truth by being the subsidized mouthpiece of plutocratic political interests.

MARGARET—Oh, Angus, how can you hold such a position, feeling so?

ANGUS—I cannot; that's just it. I am in hell, as Max would say.

MARGARET—But you can throw it up tomorrow, my dear Angus. You can live as you did before. You still have your annuity, as you used to call it.

ANGUS—Yes. It is truly an annuity—a government annuity. Annuities are usually bought for the superannuated, you know. My poor dear uncle bought this for me, because he knew that I would never amount to anything, and he didn't want me to starve.

MARGARET—And you cannot live for your ideals on that?

ANGUS—It is three hundred a year. You see readily that I could not live for either ideal on that, much less for both. I accepted the university position because I decided to give up the second ideal and live for the first. I wanted to marry the woman I love.

MARGARET—Does she know this? Would she marry you if she knew it?

ANGUS—What would you think of her if she would marry me, knowing it?

MARGARET (*a little pale, and coldly*)—I cannot speak for another woman.

ANGUS—Speak for yourself, oh my queen among women. You must know that it is you I love, that I wish to marry. Speak for yourself, Margaret.

MARGARET—Oh, Angus! No, no! You must not keep this position. I love you too well to marry you if you are so untrue to yourself.

ANGUS—Oh, Margaret—perfect woman, I knew that you must answer thus—and yet—here is the death blow to both of my ideals.

MARGARET—Why, Angus?

ANGUS—Can you ask me why, Margaret? Do you not see that I must resign my position, that I must go far away from you, that I must give myself up as far as I can to that other passion and starve myself if need be to foster it?

MARGARET—Angus, dear, I cannot see the necessity for this. Oh, how can I make you understand what I am thinking and feeling?

ANGUS—Would you have me marry you and depend upon your earnings to keep me in the respectability that would be necessary to your

husband—to the father of your children. No, no! Margaret, you would not have me do that!

MARGARET—If you loved me, as I loved you, you could do it. Women have done this sort of thing from time immemorial,—

ANGUS—But, Margaret, my love, can you not see the difference? It is cruel of you to speak thus. No! There is but one way out of it, now that I have spoken, and you have answered nobly—nobly, rightly, as you must answer, my glorious, beautiful Margaret. I must resign my position—I must go away—I must—oh, Margaret! (*He takes her in his arms and kisses her repeatedly, then seizes her hands and kisses them wildly again and again, and finally in a half blind fashion starts for the door.*)

MARGARET (*with a cry of anguish*)—Oh, Angus! Have you no thought for me?

ANGUS (*turning about with a startled look*)—No thought for you, Margaret! Am I not (*in a dazed way*) thinking only of you?

MARGARET—Not as I would think for myself, Angus—not as you think for yourself.

ANGUS (*growing suddenly very calm*)—Not as you would think for yourself? (*Slowly.*) Not as I think for myself? No, Margaret! I begin to see—and this is what I *should* do, only I cannot yet, dear. I must go away—go down

into the desert, so to speak—and—and—learn to think—for you, as I think for myself. I see, Margaret; I will try, I will try. In a year I will come back to you and let you judge how I have succeeded— (*Goes out slowly, and with bowed head.*)

MARGARET (*looking after him with love-filled eyes*)—If you succeed I shall have found my “beyond man.” Oh, Angus, Angus! (*Sinking down by the divan and burying her face in the cushions.*)

CURTAIN



ACT THREE—SLAVES

SCENE—*The same. A year later.*

(*Curtain rises on Margaret and Max.*)

MAX (*sullenly*)—You sent for me?

MARGARET—Yes, Max. I took it upon myself to send for you to see Rose. If you are human you must be moved to the heart at the sight of her. I fear she will lose her mind.

MAX—I will see her. (*Condescendingly.*)

MARGARET—I will call her and leave you alone together for a little while, later I will join you.

MAX—Yes, I wish for your presence. I have no desire to hide what I do. I must act consistently with my principles.

MARGARET—No, Max, you have no right to act consistently with what you call *your principles*, where others are concerned. Those others have just as good a right to have such *principles* as you have. That's the injustice of setting up small personal principles and wishing to force them upon others. In dealing with others one should try to act by universal principles.

MAX (*with a sneer*)—McKenzie again.

MARGARET—I occasionally have an idea of my own, Max, and *this* is my own. I will call Rose.

(*Margaret goes out door at left. Max walks impatiently up and down. Rose enters, thin and pale, with a wild hunted look, fixing a feverish*

gaze upon Max.)

MAX (*coldly*)—Well, Rose! What do you want of me?

ROSE (*piteously*)—Oh, Max! Do you not love me any more?

MAX—Of course I love you, though not, as you well know, in that foolish, selfish, exclusive fashion that would bind me to you for life—that would prevent my loving some one else in the same way.

ROSE—Yes, yes. (*Submissively.*) I remember. I do not ask you to love me so, only to love me—as you did—to love me and my little woman child—our child, Max!

MAX—Where is—our child?

ROSE—With the Carters. You know I could not bring her with me, Max—not here.

MAX—And why not, pray? What silly cowardice is this? Do you think I would refuse to own her? (*Pompously.*)

ROSE—It is not that, Max. It is not that—oh, how can I make you see? I cannot let my little one grow up under the ban and scorn of the world. I must live a lie for her sake—or (*wildly*) die for her sake!

MAX—Die for her sake! Are you beside yourself, Rose? What good would that do?

ROSE—If I should die you would have to take

her and acknowledge her. She need not have the ban of illegitimacy then. It is only her poor mother who fastens this upon her (*wringing her hands.*)

MAX—This would not help matters any. I would not acknowledge her as my child by legal action.

ROSE (*more wildly*)—Then she must die, too—

MAX (*roughly*)—What a hell women make of the social order! What do you expect me to do?

ROSE (*pleadingly*)—Give me your name, Max—give me your name legally—or (*wildly again*) I must make way with myself, and—and—her. (*Looking about her in a frightened way.*)

MAX—Call Margaret!

ROSE (*opening door at left*)—Margaret! Margaret, dear! Come! Come!

MARGARET (*entering and putting her arms about Rose*)—What is it, dear? (*Soothingly.*)

ROSE (*hiding her face in Margaret's bosom*)—Max asked for you.

MARGARET—What have you to say to me, Max?

MAX—Rose has gone back on all her principles. She has brought my child into the world, in the way in which I want my child to be born, and now she threatens to kill herself and it un-

less I put both myself and my child into slavery.

MARGARET (*with calm and noble indignation*)—How dare you say “*my child?*” What do you—what does any man give to the making of a child—a moment of passion’s pleasure—while the mother gives the greater part of a year to physical discomfort, burden and disability, culminating in an anguish of suffering, that has passed into proverb, going down to the very gates of death to bring her child into the world, to say nothing of two or three more years of wearing care of a helpless infant, from all of which you—every man—goes scot free. I wish you could feel my scorn when I hear you say “*my child.*”

MAX (*hotly*)—Should not men wish to bring children into the world?

MARGARET—They should try to make this world such that *women* would wish to bring children into it, in spite of all the burden that nature lays upon motherhood—a burden that even the most ideal social order can only alleviate—never remove.

MAX (*wildly*)—How can I go back on my principles? I have committed myself to the social order with regard to them. Besides, marriage would be hell to me—I could not endure it!

MARGARET—And it makes no difference to you how much of a hell the absence of marriage makes for Rose and—your child? You rave in fine eloquence to me. “How can I enjoy this world while my fellow beings suffer?” I ask you how can you enjoy what you call freedom for yourself at the expense of the unspeakable suffering of Rose and your child?

ROSE—Oh, yes, Max! The unspeakable suffering of our child! I foresee how she will suffer—sweet innocent—who has done nothing to bring that suffering upon herself, who will owe it all to her wicked, wicked mother. Oh, Max! I do not ask you to love me; I do not ask you to live with me; I do not even ask you to help support our little one—I will work for her—I only ask you to give me—to give her your name.

MAX (*to Margaret*)—And what good will that do? Will that save her from this social ban and scorn that is a fiction of Rose’s disordered fancy?

MARGARET—You know that this is no fiction of Rose’s disordered fancy. You know perfectly well that even the wicked and selfish desertion of a child by its father will not bring any reproach upon its head. You know well that only the refusal of the father to give it his name can do this.

MAX (*sulkily*)—The child may have my name.

MARGARET—You must give it your name in accordance with law or it will not avail, as you know perfectly well.

MAX (*excitedly*)—I detest law; I will have nothing to do with law!

MARGARET (*sternly*)—Max, answer me. If Rose had a father or brother who would threaten to horsewhip you—as you richly deserve for your conduct toward her—would you take advantage of the law to protect yourself from them?

MAX—This is altogether a different matter. One must protect oneself from public outrage. I detest the law in its interference with a man's private conscience.

MARGARET—Does not the marriage law protect a woman and her child from public outrage? Oh, blind, selfish coward that you are; unworthy the name of man!

MAX—So I am to be bullied by you two women into doing what is against all my principles of life—doing what is virtually a recantation of my confession of faith, my teachings and my writings.

MARGARET—Do you wish to have the alternative of driving the mother of your child to desperation?

MAX (*to Rose*)—Why, did I ever have anything to do with you? You have no character, no principle; I will never live with you—I will never live with any woman.

MARGARET—Do you fancy after this that Rose would wish you to live with her? And even if she were such an unspeakable idiot she would have no power to make you do it, not even the law could do that. She wants you to legitimize her child, that is all, and the only thing for you to do is to get a license and a magistrate as soon as possible.

MAX—And then leave this part of the country forever! What a hell the social order is! (*Goes out.*)

ROSE—Oh, Margaret! How strong and brave you are! But will Max do what you said, Margaret? (*Trembling.*)

MARGARET—Yes, dear; he has no choice. If the facts were known the socialist party with whom he wishes to curry political favor would make it uncomfortably warm for him, and he knows this. He knows also that I will publish the facts if he makes it necessary.

ROSE—Oh, Margaret, do you not think that it is the thought of his child that will make him do it?

MARGARET—Perhaps, dear. Let us hope so.

ROSE—Hide me, dear Margaret, until I can bring my little one home in honest arms—my little woman child—oh, she is so sweet, Margaret, so sweet and dear!

MARGARET—Yes, yes, (*petting her*) I am sure she is, and you shall bring her to *me* at first, and we will smile so into her little face that she will never guess that the world threatened to frown upon her.

CURTAIN

ACT FOUR—THE BEYOND MAN.

SCENE—*The same.*

(*Curtain rises upon Margaret and Angus standing, facing each other, clasping each other's hands and gazing into each other's face.*)

ANGUS—I have come up out of the desert, Margaret. I have solved *my* part of the problem that I took with me.

MARGARET—And how about my part, Angus?

ANGUS (*almost reverently*)—It is for you to have solved that, Margaret.

MARGARET—But did you think for me, as you thought for yourself, Angus—as I have tried to do for you?

ANGUS (*smiling an unspeakably tender smile*)—I did the best that a poor, blind, erring mortal masculine could do in that direction, Margaret. Every time I weighed myself as to any point I put you in the other side of the scale, and I tried very hard not to let you kick the beam a single time.

MARGARET—Oh, you dear Angus! And you were true to yourself all the time?

ANGUS—I think so, Margaret.

MARGARET—Come then and tell me every word of it—just how you reasoned it all out.

ANGUS—Well, of course you know I couldn't

reason about my love for you, nor about,—

MARGARET—Nor about mine for you—yes, go on, Angus.

ANGUS—So I just laid that on one side. I began with the consideration of my second ideal—my work. I made myself realize to the full what a passion I had for it—what sacrifices I would make to carry it on. How I would almost rather die than give it up; and then I put you in the other side of the scale as to your—

MARGARET—As to *my* work in life—as to my passion for it—as to what sacrifices I would make to carry it on. How I would almost rather die than give it up—

ANGUS—Yes, Margaret.

MARGARET—Oh, you dear, dear Angus! Go on.

ANGUS—Then I magnified in my imagination the glory of my work, as to how I could help humanity by means of it, making myself realize at the same time that all constructive work, whether manual, intellectual, artistic or moral, helps humanity in the same way, and then I put you in the other side of the scale and saw how your work—

MARGARET—Could do this just as yours could?

ANGUS—Yes, Margaret, just as mine could.

MARGARET—Oh, Angus, can this be possible?

ANGUS—Then I looked my first ideal in the face—my ideal of a sweet home, with the woman I love—with well-born children in it—mine and hers—with a wife who could nobly sympathize with my other ideal, who would love to help me in every way that she could to foster it—to live for it—and then I put you into the scale again, knowing—

MARGARET—Knowing that such an ideal was mine as well as yours—a sweet home, with well-born children, with a husband who would sympathize with my work, and help me in every way he could to foster it—to live for it.

ANGUS—Yes, Margaret. Then I made myself look steadily at the difference in our circumstances. I thought of my three hundred a year and of your three thousand, perhaps, and realizing that if our circumstances were reversed I would so gladly join forces with you to try to live the ideals of both of us, then I forced myself to face the fact that you—

MARGARET—That I would as gladly join forces with you to help realize these ideals of us both.

ANGUS—Yes, Margaret—

MARGARET—Oh, Angus, that was the way to think for me, as I would think for myself—as I would think for you.

ANGUS—So much for our individual ideals. Next I saw that the best way, the only way for us to begin to live for that great social ideal that we both have at heart, the ideal of elevating the race by doing everything in our power to foster the bringing of well-born children into the world, was—was—

MARGARET—To each do our individual part toward it.

ANGUS—Yes, Margaret, and so to live for both our individual and our social ideas in our little way as best we could *together*—

MARGARET—Dear, dear Angus! (*Gazing rapturously at him.*)

ANGUS—Then I saw clearly that nothing but a selfish cowardice on my part, born of tradition and social standards, stood in the way of our living for these ideals together.

MARGARET—Dear, dear Angus! (*Gazing rapturously at him as before.*)

ANGUS—And so, Margaret, I have come up out of the desert to tell you that if you ask me to marry you I will say yes.

MARGARET—Dearest Angus, with all my heart do I ask you to marry me. (*Putting one arm about his neck and caressing his cheek with the other hand as he bends his face down to hers.*)

(*They stand thus for a moment in deep and*

quiet joy, Angus holding Margaret close and kissing her again and again slowly, while she continues at intervals to caress his cheek.)

ANGUS (*mischievously*)—And so you think yourself evolutionary and not revolutionary, my Margaret?

MARGARET (*lifting her head from his shoulder and blissfully smiling up at him*)—Yes, Angus! Why not?

ANGUS—Don't you see what a social revolutionist—what a bold unwomanly woman you are, asking a man to marry you and offering him the inducement of engaging to support yourself and your children—turning the world upside down in fact—

MARGARET—Oh, you darling Angus! You know that it is only with you that I could do this, and that it is—

ANGUS—Only with you that I could do this. Yes, dearest, and that reminds me that I weighed something else in those scales.

MARGARET—What dear?

ANGUS—How shall I put it? Will you understand? One day I remembered what you once said about men being freer in marriage than women. I felt that I did not wish to be freer than you. I thought of proposing to you that we should agree to have neither a spoken nor a

tacit pledge of faithfulness between us, so that you might realize that the legal bond would be only for your protection from society, that I would not have it bind you in any way, that you would be free to live your life without accounting to me for anything—as free as you are now—freer than you are now.

MARGARET (*softly*)—I have found him! I have found him!—the beyond man.

ANGUS—What do you say, dear?

MARGARET—I am in heaven, Angus,—that is all,—I could stay here forever!

ANGUS (*folding her close again and kissing her*)—I shall need to be much away from you, Margaret in the years to come, on account of my work.

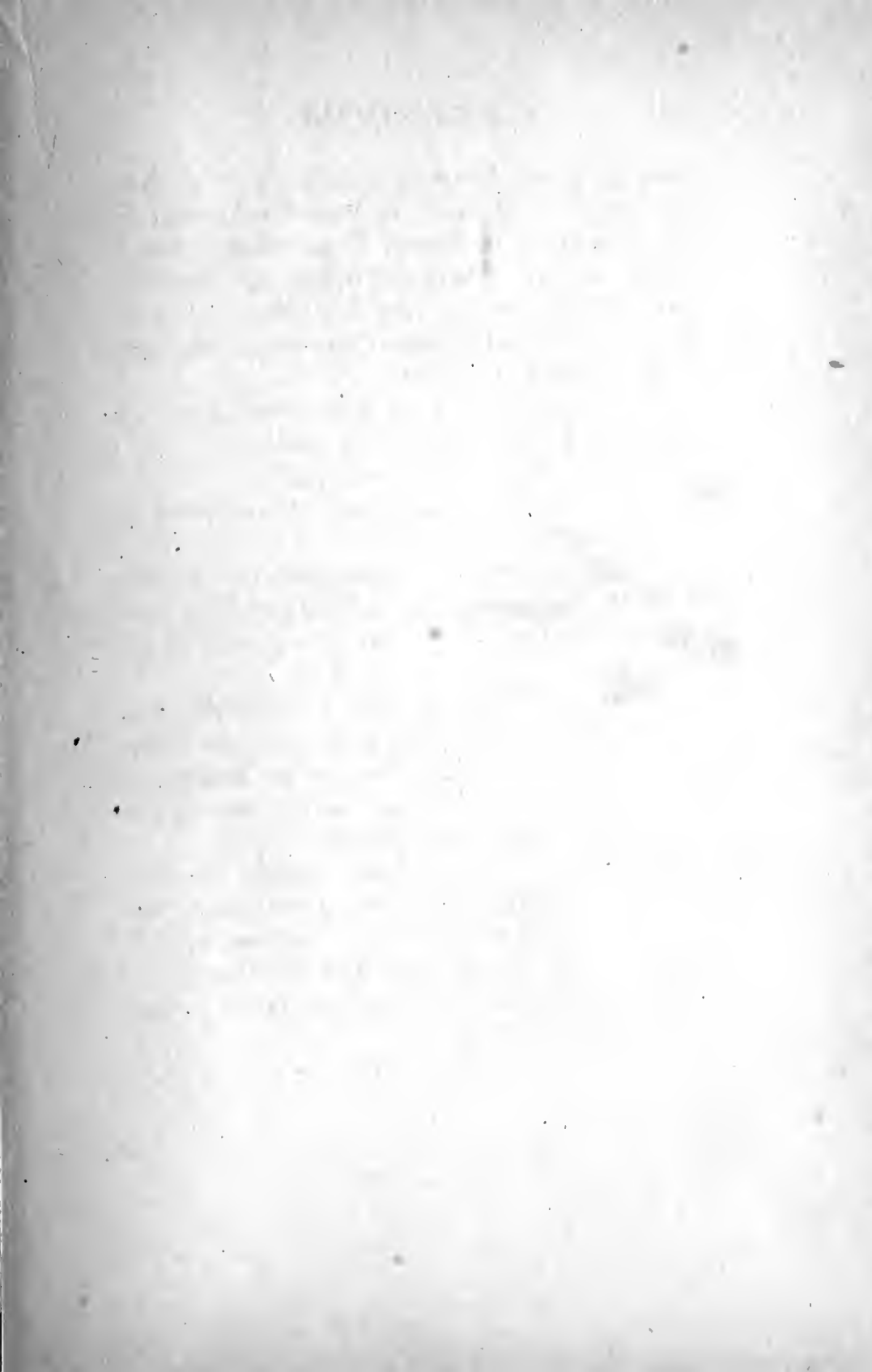
MARGARET—And every time you come home to me it will be as the first coming of my lover, my beloved, my bridegroom, my dear husband.

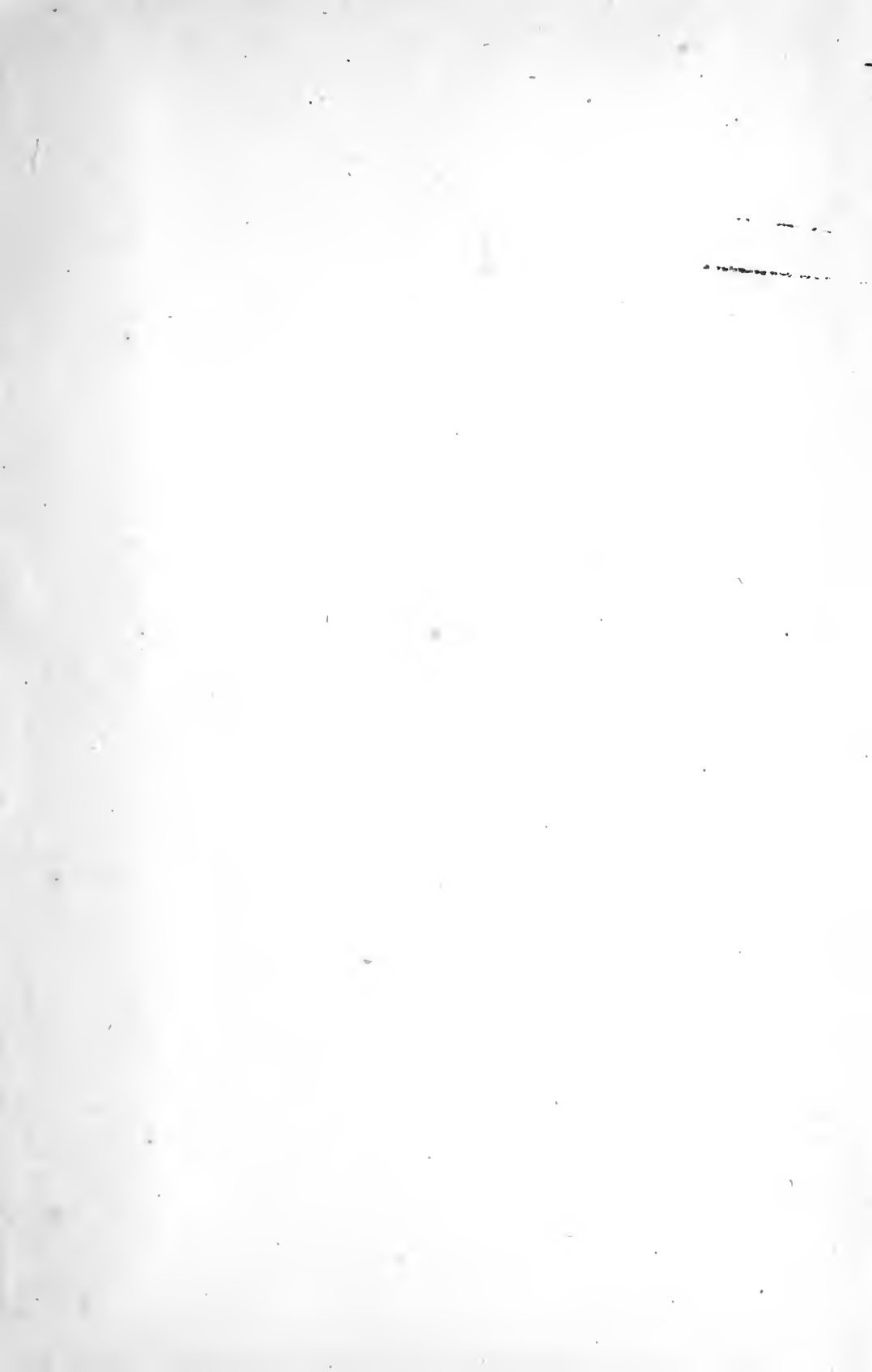
ANGUS—And every time I come home to you I shall enter anew into Paradise.

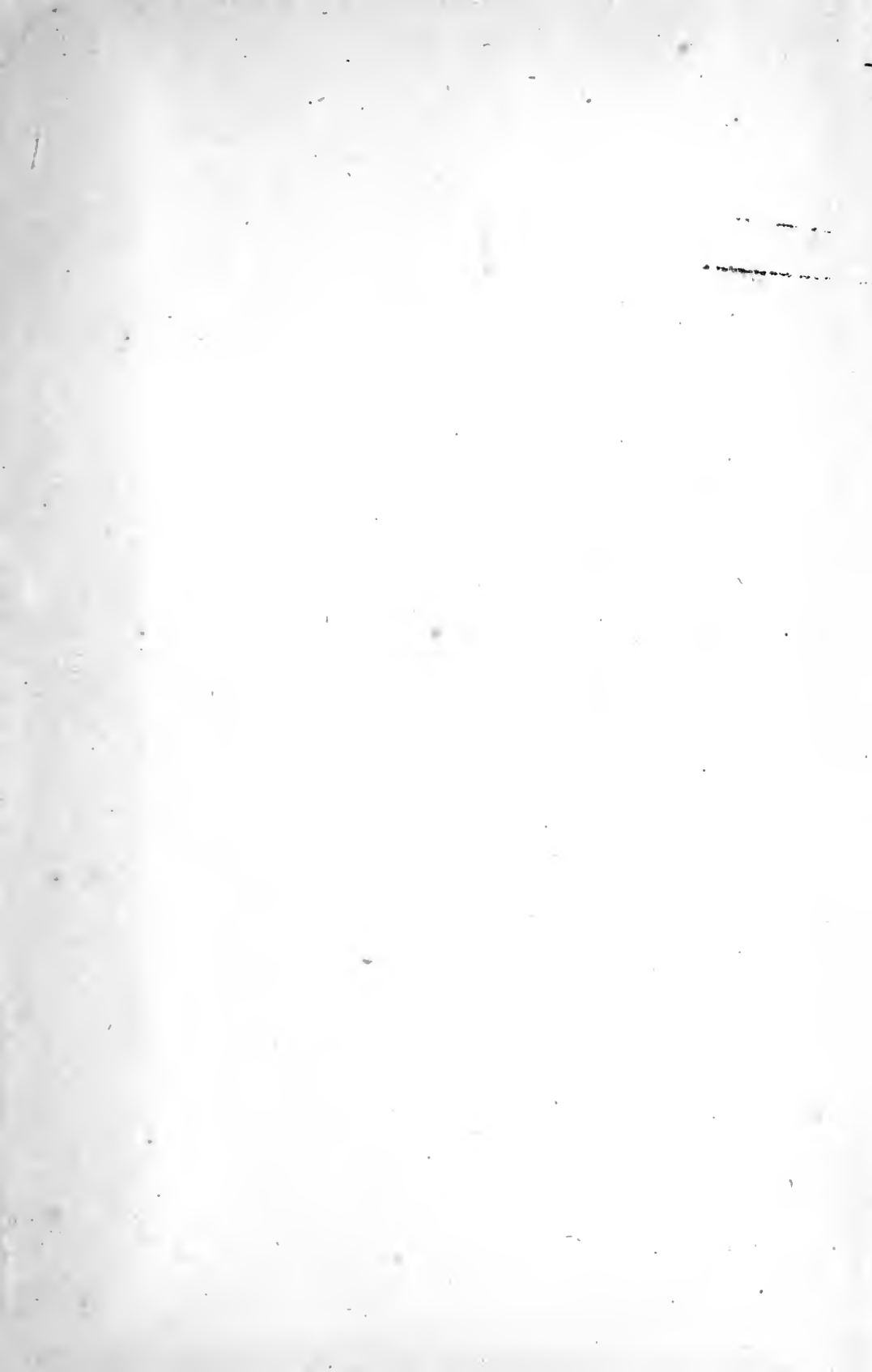
MARGARET—And we who shall be so free, shall out of this very freedom exaggerate the ideal of monogamy, and so be sufficient to each other in love as long as we both shall live.

ANGUS—Sufficient to each other in life so long as we both shall *love*.

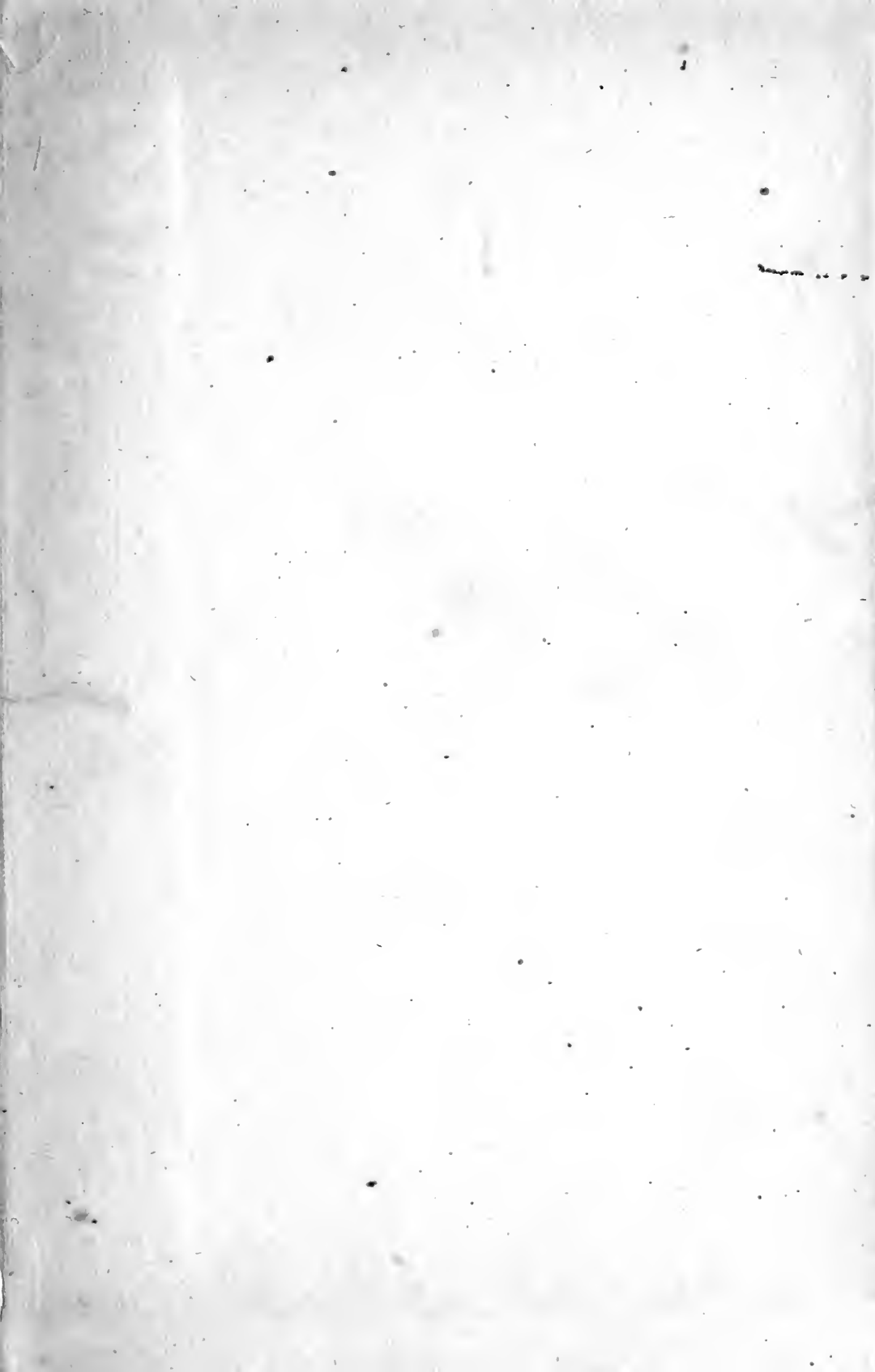
CURTAIN







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